

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Approved For Release 2004/01/16 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000500340041-8

Danger in Cuba.

Senators trying to keep an eye on military developments in Cuba are painting a somewhat more nervous picture than President Kennedy did when he gave the assurance there is no new buildup there.

Sen. Wayne Morse, chairman of the subcommittee on Latin American affairs, said, following a briefing given by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and John A. McCone, Central Intelligence Agency director, that the country can have confidence in the President's statements on the Cuban situation.

However, Sen. George D. Aiken noted that the Russians have "enormously strong" military and political forces on the island. And Sen. Stuart Symington said he is worried about the number of Russian air force personnel among the 17,000 to 20,000 Soviet representatives in Cuba. The higher figure is given by Sen. Kenneth B. Keating who appears to have excellent sources of his own for developing information on what goes on with our truculent neighbor, only 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

It is Sen. Aiken's view that Soviet strength on the island is growing stronger—this despite what the President had to say—and Sen. Symington also believes that what is in Cuba now is "considerably more than what it was a few months ago."

The capacity of Cuba, or Russian forces located there, to launch an attack on the United States or on other points within the Western Hemisphere which, according to presidential definition, would amount to the same thing, has, of course, been the chief U. S. con-

cern, and led to last year's direct confrontation and the imposing of the short-lived blockade.

But last year's tension stemmed from the presence of missiles in Cuba which gave the Russian forces long-range nuclear striking power, and the senators and the President both appear equally satisfied that these are no longer present.

So the senators are now raising the question of whether something nearly as dangerous to hemispheric security is not emerging in the reported strengthening of other kinds of Russian fighting power.

The President has given no answer to the question, and neither did the senators get the answer from the State Department or CIA during this week's briefing. Or to put it another way, in connection with the briefing, what the senators were told in the secret conference did not allay their fears that a challenge to the security of the United States and its hemispheric allies continues to be presented in an increasingly serious form by the Soviet military buildup which the President is more than inclined to doubt, but which the senators insist is taking place.

It is difficult at this point to forget that last year's crisis was preceded by a similar contrast of estimates on events taking place in Cuba. And it is to be hoped that any significant change which may currently be going on in Cuba-based Communist capacity for making trouble is actually being diagnosed by the President and his advisers with complete accuracy. One rude awakening is quite enough.